

# Maurice Hinchey NEWS

22nd CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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## **HINCHEY DISAPPOINTED WITH LATEST DELAY IN HUDSON CLEANUP**

KINGSTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-22) today expressed displeasure upon learning that the removal of toxins from the Hudson River will be delayed for an additional year. Hinchey learned from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that it is adjusting the schedule for the removal of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from the river, pushing back the start of the actual cleanup, from 2005 to 2006.

"This is profoundly disappointing news," said Hinchey. "The Hudson has been suffering under a toxic burden for decades. The decision by EPA to remove the PCBs at General Electric's expense was a great victory and one of the very few pro-environment decisions the Bush Administration has made. But it has now been over a year since that ruling was issued. How much longer do we have to wait to begin restoring this national treasure to health?"

Over a period of thirty years, General Electric (GE) dumped over one million pounds of PCBs directly into the Hudson River from its facilities in Hudson Falls and Fort Edward, NY. A decade of independently examined scientific studies determined that the PCBs will continue to pose an unacceptable risk to human health and the environment unless they are removed.

In February 2002, EPA issued a Record of Decision that called for the toxins to be removed from the Hudson and required GE to pay for the cleanup. The company was given until April 9, 2002 to submit an offer to finance or conduct the remediation, or face severe fines. GE submitted its "good faith offer" on time, but failed to fully commit to the cleanup. The company only agreed to do the sampling for the design of the clean up, a minute portion of what is ultimately expected. In informing Hinchey of the one-year delay today, EPA cited continuing negotiations with GE as the cause.

"If GE had been responsible and agreed to the full cleanup last year, we wouldn't be having this delay," said Hinchey. "There is no reason why these negotiations should slow the process down. I certainly hope this decision does not represent any backsliding in the administration's commitment to this project. If GE is allowed to evade responsibility for the cleanup, the taxpayers will be left to foot the bill."